



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# Public Health Reports.

(Formerly "Abstract of Sanitary Reports.")

Treasury Department, United States Marine-Hospital Service. Published in accordance with act of Congress approved February 15, 1893.

VOL. XI.

WASHINGTON, D. C., JULY 31, 1896.

No. 31.

## UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Supervising Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

### *The smallpox outbreak at Key West, Fla.*

KEY WEST, FLA., *July 21, 1896.*

SIR: I have the honor to report as follows, upon the epidemic of smallpox at this port and the measures taken to meet the same. I found upon my arrival a total of 27 cases and 7 deaths. Two new cases have occurred since and an additional case came under consideration to-day. Dr. Porter and I will endeavor to make diagnosis to-morrow on this last. One patient in a Cuban family is a white child. All others are negroes and are almost without exception in close, squalid, and illy ventilated quarters, which by reason of their proximity to others, being separated only by unsubstantial board fences, can not under any conceivable circumstances be efficiently isolated from other houses. Fully three-fourths of these people are desquamating, and being nearly well are chafing under restraint and will most probably invade other premises in secret. Indeed, they probably have done so, as the case reported to-day is in a heretofore uninfected house.

As stated in my telegram of 20th, Passed Assistant Surgeon Guitéras had already turned over to State Health Officer J. Y. Porter the 25 tents sent from New York, and upon my arrival I found a camp provided for. \* \* \*

The hospital, a spacious, airy building, well located and finely adapted for either smallpox or yellow fever, is very nearly ready (probably two days more work will complete it) and the tents were fully ready on Friday, 17th instant, when Dr. Porter called upon the mayor to place the sick and suspected in camp. This was not done, the attempt resulting in the assembly of a mob and the imminent danger of riot. He then ordered the sheriff to carry out the law, but that officer made no attempt to do so.

Dr. Porter then decided that the city must guard, feed, nurse, and treat her own sick; and that his duty to the State was paramount to

all other, and therefore he should quarantine Key West until Key West should come to reason and allow these people to be placed where they would do no further harm. He took what I consider the just ground, that the State ought not to be expected to maintain fourteen distinct pest centers in the city limits at a large cost, when it had already provided one which was competent to care for all, and allow the rapid disinfection of all the infected spots. \* \* \*

As to my own part in the matter, I beg to state that under your instructions I informed Dr. Porter that I would equip and run the camp, with result as above stated. I have visited the cases, and studied the situation, and am convinced that it will be a long-drawn-out epidemic if anything so ill-advised as allowing cases to remain at home is attempted. In my first interview with Dr. Porter, I advised house-to-house inspection and vaccination. \* \* \* The very peculiar population, representing all parts of the world, and the Latin and African races very largely in the majority, renders such systematic work as might be easily done in other States very difficult here. I beg to report that I borrowed the launch *Gamma* of Passed Assistant Surgeon Guitéras yesterday, and manning her, made an inspection, with Dr. Porter, of two outlying keys where smallpox was said to exist, but the report was false. \* \* \*

I shall report every occurrence of importance by wire.

Very, respectfully,

J. H. WHITE,

*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, FLA., July 25, 1896.

Assumed charge of camp to-day; found 1 new case. Need probably \$80 worth clothing to facilitate disinfection persons; will purchase. Send formalin and 10 pounds bichloride. Porter and I disinfect houses next week; hope to soon close the whole matter. Full details by to-day's mail.

WHITE,

*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, FLA., July 25, 1896.

SIR: I have the honor to report that upon request of Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, State health officer of Florida, I this day assumed the command and expenses of the smallpox camp heretofore established under the name of "Camp Patterson." \* \* \*

Dr. Porter found that the cleansing of the city and hunting out of new cases would occupy all means at his disposal, and hence requested me to-day to accept the charge in accordance with original offer which I made him in behalf of this service. There have been no new foci of diseases since my arrival on July 14, but several new cases have occurred. One discovered to-day adds no little to our perplexities. A small negro boy ran away from home one week ago, and returned last night with well marked variola discreta. No clue can be obtained as to the whereabouts of this boy during the past week, and the eruption is apparently in the fourth or fifth day.

All the cases and all the suspects so far known are at the camp at this writing, save three families, and two of these will be so placed this evening, and the other to-morrow morning.

The State has outfitted camp and will bear that expense, so that there will be no question of property to attend to at the close. As stated in my telegram to-day, I will buy a few suits of cheap clothing to facilitate

the discharge of persons, and these can be returned and disinfected if the bureau so elect, and I ask instruction on this point. I submit nominations of guards and cooks in another letter and will submit those for nurses to-morrow.

Failing the occurrence of new foci, and this at present seems unlikely, I believe I will be able to announce the closure of the camp in one month.

The battle ship *Maine* has, by means of launches, patrolled the harbor and returned all nonvaccinated crews, and the value of this service, in conjunction with similar work done by the Florida health board steamer *Germ*, has been very great in enforcing vaccination. Hundreds who were dodging vaccination have been reached thereby.

So much of revaccination has been done that I consider the result worth what the epidemic has cost in the way of future immunity, and the quarantining of the island has tended to make vaccination popular and to turn public opinion in the direction of favoring the camp—two excellent results, which, in my opinion, fully justify the enforcement of it by Dr. Porter.

Every endeavor will be made, both in the city and at the camp, to bring matters to a conclusion at the earliest moment. \* \* \*

Very respectfully,

J. H. WHITE,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, *July 26, 1896.*

One new case, all at camp. Two suspects and 1 old case discharged. All last cases in old foci and expected. Do not think many more will occur in town.

WHITE,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, FLA., *July 27, 1896.*

One new case in camp. \* \* \* Nothing new in city.

WHITE,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, FLA., *July 28, 1896.*

One new case, none discharged. \* \* \*

WHITE,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

KEY WEST, FLA., *July 29, 1896.*

Nothing new to-day. One house thoroughly disinfected. \* \* \*

WHITE,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*